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ABSTRACT

In August 2001, applicants to Ontario, Canada, universities received a survey from the Council of Ontario Universities to better understand the socioeconomic status and representation of members of recognized designated groups (Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, members of visible minority groups, people with disabilities, and women) in the university applicant pool. The net survey total was 94,655, and 17,403 completed surveys (18.4%) were returned. Only 1.8% of respondents were aboriginal persons; 61.5% were women, and 34% were visible minorities. The overall number of respondents was large, but the low response rate was a concern. However, comparisons with other data sources brought some level of confidence to survey results. Results from this initial survey and surveys in later years could be used to build a database institutions could use in further research. Data could also be used to understand the results of institutional and governmental policy. Members of the Council have discussed the possibility of including the Equity Survey in questions for the university applicants' survey, thus doubling the survey size and making results available before students arrive on campus. It is recommended that the survey be continued, included in the Applicant Survey, and that institutions be encouraged to share their data with other institutions in an effort to understand how policy affects individuals from designated groups. Five appendixes contain the survey, data about designated groups, information about methodology, and a glossary. (Contains 11 tables.) (SLD)

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ED 469 488

The Equity Survey

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary..... i

A. Purpose..... 1

B. Methodology..... 1

C. Results..... 1
- C.1. Gender 2
- C.2. Persons with Disabilities..... 3
- C.3. Aboriginal Persons..... 4
- C.4. Visible Minorities..... 4
- C.5. Financial 5

D. Observations..... 6
- D.1. Response Rate..... 6
- D.2. Longitudinal Studies..... 6
- D.3. Policy Implications..... 7

E. Recommendations..... 8

APPENDIX A: The Equity Survey..... 9
APPENDIX B: Methodology..... 10
APPENDIX C: Statistics Canada Report..... 12
APPENDIX D: Data Quality..... 15
APPENDIX E: Glossary of Terms..... 22

Executive Summary

In August 2001, applicants to Ontario universities received a survey from the Council of Ontario Universities (COU). The survey was developed by members of the Standing Committee on Employment and Educational Equity and the Standing Committee on the Status of Women to better understand the socio-economic status and representation of members of recognized designated groups (Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, members of visible minority groups, people with disabilities and women) in the university applicant pool. Universities will also be using the information for research purposes and possibly for planning student programs and services.

The members of the Standing Committee on Employment and Educational Equity and the Standing Committee on the Status of Women had two primary reasons for undertaking the Equity Survey:

- Little information is known about the needs of special students before they arrive on campus and, consequently, the services required to meet these needs.
- Since many institutions had begun to undertake a survey similar to the Equity Survey, establishing a system-wide survey was seen as a cost-effective approach.

Results

Of the 96,240 surveys sent to first-year, direct-entry program applicants, 1,585 were returned (deceased or wrong address), leaving a net survey of 94,655. Of that amount, 17,403 (18.4%) completed and returned the survey.

Briefly, the number and percentage of respondents who indicated belonging to each of the designated groups was:

Designated Group	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Females	10,696	61.5%
Persons with Disabilities	840	4.9%
Aboriginals Persons	301	1.8%
Visible Minorities	5,818	34.0%

Although the overall number of respondents was large, the Statistics Canada statistician who reviewed the results raised concerns regarding the low response rate. Members of the standing committees also had the same concerns regarding the response rate and undertook an examination of related surveys to complement the Equity Survey findings. The conclusion was that it is unclear whether the respondents constitute a random sample and, therefore, whether they are representative of non-respondents and, consequently, the entire applicant pool.

However, at an aggregate level, the comparisons with other data sources proved to be quite favourable bringing some level of confidence to the survey results. For that reason, members of the standing committees believe that the data collected through the Equity Survey should continue to be collected in 2002 and beyond. The primary purpose of the survey was to better understand the applicant pool to enable institutions to service the

needs of special students more effectively. The trend data provided by a longitudinal study is imperative to this understanding.

The members believe that there are additional uses for this data:

- Building a database of this sort would provide a useful resource for institutions to use in further research. For example, it would be possible to use the data to look at the participation of designated groups in specific programs or faculties and follow the applicants through the registration, graduation and employment phases.

- The data could be used to understand the effects of institutional and government policy. For example, current OSAP assistance is capped at $9,350 for a single student and $17,000 for a married student (34-week program). The Equity Survey found that visible minority groups are not uniformly dependent on OSAP. As the costs of university education (not only tuition, but also books and living expenses) continue to increase without a parallel increase in OSAP maximums, visible minority groups who are heavily reliant on OSAP may not have access to the financial resources needed to access postsecondary studies or may be forced to rely on the private sector, such as banks, and incur high-interest costs.

Members of the standing committees believe that in order to fully understand how policy affects designated groups at both the system and institutional level, institutions need access to the complete Equity Survey data set. Members believe that by using current COU data-sharing guidelines, it is possible to access all data at the institutional level without having a negative impact on any institution.

Future Surveys

The members discussed the possibility of including the Equity Survey questions in ACUMEN's University Applicant Survey (UAS). This would serve a number of purposes. First, efforts, such as doubling the sample size, are being undertaken by COU to improve the UAS's response rate. Members felt that this would help to ensure that a higher response rate is also achieved for the Equity Survey questions, albeit involving a smaller number of potential respondents.

Second, since the UAS is conducted in the spring, results will be available before students arrive on campus. Third, the UAS is an extensive questionnaire that would allow for greater cross-tabulations and analysis of data. Finally, the UAS appears to be a cost-effective way for the Equity Survey to continue and provide the needed longitudinal data.

Recommendations

- That the data collected through the Equity Survey continue to be collected in 2002 and beyond.

- That the Equity Survey questions be included in ACUMEN's University Applicant Survey in order to increase the response rate.

- That following a two-year trial period, the validity and accuracy of using ACUMEN's University Applicant Survey as the instrument to collect equity data

be reviewed by members of the Standing Committee on Employment and Educational Equity and the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

- That a member of the Standing Committee on Employment and Educational Equity and the Standing Committee on the Status of Women serve on the ACUMEN University Applicant Survey Steering Committee.

- That institutions be encouraged to share their own data with other institutions to facilitate a better understanding of how policy affects individuals from designated groups.

Equity Survey 2001

A. Purpose:

In August 2001, applicants to Ontario universities received a survey from the Council of Ontario Universities (COU). The survey was developed by members of the Standing Committee on Employment and Educational Equity and the Standing Committee on the Status of Women to better understand the socio-economic status and representation of members of recognized designated groups (Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, members of visible minority groups, people with disabilities and women) in the university applicant pool. (See Appendix A for a copy of the survey.) Universities will also be using the information for research purposes and possibly for planning student programs and services.

The members of the Standing Committee on Employment and Educational Equity and the Standing Committee on the Status of Women had two primary reasons for undertaking the Equity Survey:

- Little information is known about the needs of special students before they arrive on campus and, consequently, the services required to meet these needs.[1] Obtaining this information in a timely fashion is important because 1) it allows institutions to be proactive in providing services; 2) it demonstrates that Ontario universities are generally accessible; and 3) it flags areas of concern.

- Since many institutions had begun to undertake a survey similar to the Equity Survey, establishing a system-wide survey was seen as a cost-effective approach.

B. Methodology:

In mid-August, 96,240 surveys were mailed to all first-year direct-entry program applicants who applied through the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC). An overview of the methodology can be found in Appendix B.

C. Results:

Table 1: Response Rate

Surveys	Returned	Net Surveys	Completed	Response Rate
96,240	1,585	94,655	17,403	18.4%

The response rates varied by program of study: 0% (pharmacy) to 30.5% (veterinary medicine).

[1] The Canadian postsecondary sector does little research in this area, unlike the American postsecondary sector where such research is comparatively commonplace.

The number of respondents who completed each question was fairly consistent with the overall response rate: over 98% of respondents indicated their designated group, almost 100% ranked their financial sources and 94% indicated their family income.

Although the total number of respondents was large, concerns regarding the low response rate were raised by the Statistics Canada statistician who reviewed the results (see Appendix C for the full report). The standing committee members also had the same concerns regarding the response rate and undertook an examination of related surveys to complement the Equity Survey findings (see Table 2)[2]. The conclusion was that it is unclear whether the respondents constitute a random sample and, therefore, whether they are representative of non-respondents and, consequently, the entire applicant pool.

Table 2 demonstrates that at the system-level, however, the results appear to have some validity.

Table 2: Summary of Complementary Data Sources

	Equity Survey	OUAC	ACUMEN University Applicant Survey	Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities	1996 Census (15 to 24 yrs)
Gender	Male – 38.5% Female – 61.5%	Male – 45.0% Female – 55.0%			Male – 49.3% Female – 50.7%
Persons with Disabilities	4.9%			3.0%	
Aboriginal Persons	1.8%				1.8%
Visible Minorities	34.0%		30.2%		23.3%*

* with some university education

C.1. Gender

Table 3: Gender

	Number	Percent
Male	6,709	38.5%
Female	10,696	61.5%

- Most respondents indicated arts as their first-choice program (31.1%), followed by science (18.5%), commerce (13.9%) and engineering (10.7%).

- There was some variation across gender: 22.0% of males indicated arts as their first-choice program, followed by engineering (21.4%), science (19.7%) and commerce (16.7%); 36.8% of female respondents indicated arts as their first-

[2] Please see Appendix D for a more detailed discussion of the complementary studies.

choice, followed by science (17.7%) and commerce (12.2%). Only 4.0% of female respondents indicated engineering as their first-choice program.

- Of respondents who accepted a place at an Ontario university, female respondents were more likely than male respondents to accept their first-choice institution (59.0% versus 54.9%).[3]

C.2. Persons with Disabilities

Table 4: Persons with Disabilities

	Number	Percent
Male	342	5.2%
Female	498	4.7%
Total	840	4.9%

- Of the 840 respondents who reported a disability, 40.7% were male and 59.3% were female. Learning impairment was the most noted form of disability (34%).

- Respondents who reported a disability selected the same first-choice programs as respondents who reported no disability, but in differing percentages: arts (40.2% versus 30.6%), science (13.0% versus 18.7%) and commerce (10.2% versus 14.1%).

- The percentage of male and female respondents who reported a disability and chose engineering as their first-choice program was considerably lower than the percentage of respondents who did not report a disability (14.6% versus 21.8% for males and 1.4% versus 4.1% for females).

- Respondents with disabilities showed a slightly higher chance of having applied to a diploma program than respondents who did not report a disability (3.3% versus 1.7%). This discrepancy was greater for males (4.1% versus 1.5%) than for females (2.8% versus 1.8%).

- Of the respondents who accepted a place at an Ontario university and indicated having a disability, 58.6% accepted their first-choice institution, 18.3% accepted their second-choice institution, 15.5% accepted their third-choice institution and 7.6% accepted their fourth- or greater-choice. This is similar to respondents who indicated no disability: 57.2%, 21.0%, 12.8% and 8.9% for choices one to four, respectively.[4]

[3] No analysis of acceptances and offers was conducted.

[4] Please see page 18 for the institutional choice of all respondents regardless of designated group.

C.3. Aboriginal Persons

Table 5: Aboriginal Persons

	Number	Percent
Male	101	1.5%
Female	200	1.9%
Total	301	1.8%

- Of the 17,103 respondents to Question B, 301 (1.8%) respondents reported being an Aboriginal person (33.5% male and 66.5% female).

- Respondents who reported being an Aboriginal person listed arts, science, commerce and engineering as their first-choice programs (36.2%, 14.6%, 8.6% and 8.3%, respectively). Non-Aboriginal persons chose the same four programs, but in differing proportions (31.0%, 18.5%, 14.0% and 10.7%).

- Program choices for male and female Aboriginal respondents were fairly consistent except for arts (28.7% for males and 40.0% for females) and engineering (22.8% for males and 1.0% for females). Note: only two female respondents indicated that engineering was their first-choice program.

- Of the respondents who accepted a place at an Ontario university and indicated being an Aboriginal person, 68.8% accepted their first-choice institution, 15.4% accepted their second-choice institution, 13.1% accepted their third-choice institution, and 2.7% accepted their fourth- or greater-choice.

- A higher proportion of Aboriginal respondents accepted their first-choice institution than non-Aboriginal respondents (non-Aboriginal respondents: 57.1%, 21.0%, 12.9% and 8.9% for choices one to four, respectively).

C.4. Visible Minorities

Table 6: Visible Minorities

	Number	Percent
Male	2,688	41%
Female	3,130	30%
Total	5,818	34%

- Of the respondents who indicated that they belonged to a visible minority group, 37.5% reported that they were Chinese.

- Respondents who reported being a visible minority chose science, arts, commerce and engineering (25.0%, 18.6%, 18.6% and 17.3%, respectively) as their first-choice programs. This is the only designated group where arts was not the main first choice program. Compared to respondents who reported that they were not a visible minority, the results are quite dramatic: arts (18.6% versus 37.3%), science (25.0% versus 15.2%), commerce (18.6% versus 11.6%) and engineering (17.3% versus 7.4%).

- Program choice distribution across gender was fairly consistent for respondents who reported being a visible minority except for a few programs: fewer males than females applied to arts (13.1% versus 23.3%), while a greater number of males than females applied to engineering (27.9% versus 8.2%) and mathematics (5.9% versus 2.7%).

- Fewer male visible minority respondents than male non-visible minority respondents applied to education (0.3% versus 1.0%), journalism (0.06% versus 1.7%), and physical and health education and recreation (1.6% versus 5.3%).

- Fewer female visible minority respondents than female non-visible minority respondents applied to education (0.7% versus 2.3%), nursing (2.5% versus 4.2%), and physical and health education and recreation (1.6% versus 5.4%).

- Of the respondents who accepted a place at an Ontario university and indicated being a visible minority, 50.7% accepted their first-choice institution, 22.0% accepted their second-choice institution, 14.4% accepted their third-choice institution, and 12.8% accepted their fourth- or greater-choice. The comparable figures for non-visible minorities are 60.5%, 20.4%, 12.2% and 7%.

- Within the visible minority grouping, there was considerable range in first-choice acceptances: 38.5% (Japanese) to 58% (Latin American).

C.5. Financial

- Both male and female applicants who completed question D1 ranked contributions from their parents as the number one financial source, 42.4% and 40.7%, respectively.

- Parents were ranked as the number one financial source by respondents of all three designated groups: 38.6% 24.3% and 40.0% for persons with disabilities, Aboriginal persons and visible minorities, respectively.

- Personal income and/or savings was ranked as the highest secondary financial source, 22.8% and 24.0% for male and female respondents, respectively.

- OSAP was ranked as the number one financial source by 22.8% of the male respondents and 22.4% of the female respondents.

- OSAP was ranked as the number one financial source by 22.6% of the respondents who indicated they had a disability, 17.9% of the Aboriginal respondents and 34.8% of the visible minority respondents.

- 23.9% of all respondents to question D2 reported a family income of less than $29,999 (25.0% male and 23.2% female).

- 13.3% of all respondents to question D2 reported a family income of more than $120,000 (14.5% male and 12.4% female).

D. Observations

D.1. Response Rate

While the large number of respondents allows for some understanding of the applicants who responded to the survey, that understanding cannot be transferred to the non-respondents as a result of the low response rate. Consequently, the committee members found that the practical use of the survey results was limited. The results cannot be used to measure the number of applicants from all designated and socio-economic groups in the applicant pool.

For that reason, the results cannot be compared to the general population to determine the overall success of designated groups in the applicant pool. For example, since the true percentage of applicants with disabilities in the applicant pool is unknown, it is not possible to determine if persons with disabilities are applying to universities in greater or smaller numbers than the non-disabled population.

However, at an aggregate level, the comparisons with other data sources proved to be quite favourable, bringing some level of confidence to the survey results (see Appendix D).

D.2. Longitudinal Studies

Despite the limitations of the survey findings, members of the standing committees believe that the type of data collected by the Equity Survey should continue to be collected in 2002 and beyond. The primary purpose of the survey was to better understand the applicant pool to enable institutions to service the needs of special students more effectively. The trend data provided by a longitudinal study is imperative to this understanding.

Moreover, building a database of this sort would provide a useful resource for institutions for further research. For example, it would be possible to use the data to look at the participation of designated groups in specific programs or faculties, and to follow the applicants through the registration, graduation and employment phases.

The members discussed the possibility of including the Equity Survey questions in ACUMEN's University Applicant Survey (UAS). This would serve a number of purposes. First, efforts, such as doubling the sample size, are being undertaken by COU to improve the UAS's response rate. Members felt that this would help to ensure that a higher response rate is also achieved for the Equity Survey questions, albeit involving a smaller number of potential respondents.

Second, since the UAS is conducted in the spring, results will be available before students arrive on campus. Third, the UAS is an extensive questionnaire that would allow for greater cross-tabulations and analysis of data. Finally, the UAS appears to be a cost-effective way for the Equity Survey to continue and provide the needed longitudinal data.

D.3. Policy Implications

The members discussed the need to view the results of the 2001 Equity Survey and future surveys within the context of government and institutional policy. For example:

- *The Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA)*: When the ODA was initially introduced by the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, the main focus was on physical disabilities. After consultation with stakeholders, including the universities, the definition of disability was broadened to include non-physical disabilities. The members of the standing committees applauded this change as survey results indicate that learning disabilities are considerably higher than mobility disabilities. Having accurate data helps institutions respond to government policy in a timely fashion.

- *Affordability and Accessibility:* At the system level, the survey results indicate that approximately 40% of survey respondents rely on parental contributions as their main financial source, whereas 22% of survey respondents rely on OSAP as their main financial source. However, there is considerable variation between institutions. For example, at one institution, the percentage of respondents who indicated OSAP as their number one financial source was 12%. While at another institution, the percentage was 30%. The results also show that respondents from designated groups do not access OSAP to the same extent. For example, the visible minority respondents who indicated OSAP as the main financial source ranged from 15.8% to 52.3% depending on their participant group. The members of the standing committees are concerned that, without adequate understanding of the differential distribution of OSAP, it is not possible to adequately understand issues of affordability and accessibility at the system or institutional level.

- *OSAP Limits*: Regardless of assessed need, current OSAP assistance is capped at $9,350 for a single student and $17,000 for a married student (34-week program). It was noted above that certain visibility groups are more dependent on OSAP than others. As the costs of university education (not only tuition, but also books and living expenses) continue to increase without a parallel increase in OSAP maximums, visible minority groups who are heavily reliant on OSAP may not

have access to the financial resources needed to access postsecondary studies or may be forced to rely on the private sector, such as banks, and incur high-interest costs.

Members of the standing committees believe that, in order to fully understand how policy affects designated groups at both the system and institutional level, institutions need access to the complete Equity Survey data set. Members believe that by using current COU data-sharing guidelines it is possible to access all data at the institutional level without having a negative impact on any institution.

E. Recommendations

- That the data collected through the Equity Survey continue to be collected in 2002 and beyond.

- That the Equity Survey questions be included in ACUMEN's University Applicant Survey in order to increase the response rate.

- That following a two-year trial period, the validity and accuracy of using ACUMEN's University Applicant Survey as the instrument to collect this data be reviewed by the Standing Committee on Employment and Educational Equity and the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

- That a member of the the Standing Committee on Employment and Educational Equity and Standing Committee on the Status of Women serve on the ACUMEN University Applicant Survey Steering Committee.

- That institutions be encouraged to share their own data with other institutions to facilitate a better understanding of how policy affects individuals from designated groups.

APPENDIX A

Ontario Universities' Equity Survey

Please return the survey in the envelope provided or complete the on-line survey at:

www.usurvey.ca/equity2001a

Reference Number | PIN

The Ontario universities believe in the principle of equity and are committed to ensuring all students are treated fairly and with respect. Universities will be using the information collected through this survey for research purposes and to possibly plan student programs and services. Information collected through this survey will not be used for admission decisions. Only summary reports on the information collected will be published. The information will be presented in such a way that individuals cannot be identified. Responses to this survey are voluntary. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please note that a person may belong to more than one designated group.

Please check the applicable box.

A. Are you a person with a disability?

☐ No ☐ Yes (checking sub-groups is optional)

- ☐ Co-ordination or dexterity impairment (for example: cerebral palsy)
- ☐ Mobility impairment (for example: paraplegia)
- ☐ Non visible impairment (for example: hemophilia)
- ☐ Blindness or visual impairment (for example: glaucoma)
- ☐ Deafness or hearing impairment (for example: unable to hear or difficulty hearing)
- ☐ Muteness/speech impairment (for example: unable to generate or emit verbal messages, such as aphasia)
- ☐ Developmental/mental impairment (for example: Down's Syndrome)
- ☐ Psychiatric impairment (for example: a previous mental illness, one which is under control, such as schizophrenia)
- ☐ Learning impairment (for example: dyslexia)
- ☐ Other disability

B. An Aboriginal person is a North American Indian or member of a First Nation, a Métis, or Inuit. North American Indians or members of a First Nation include status, treaty or registered Indians, as well as non-status and non-registered Indians.

Are you an Aboriginal person?

☐ No ☐ Yes (checking sub-groups is optional)

- ☐ Status Indian
- ☐ Non-Status Indian
- ☐ Métis
- ☐ Inuit

C. Members of visible minorities are persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour, regardless of birthplace.

Are you in a visible minority group?

☐ No ☐ Yes (checking sub-groups is optional)

- ☐ Black
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Filipino
- ☐ Japanese
- ☐ Korean
- ☐ Indo-Pakistani (For example: East Indian, Bangaladeshi, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)
- ☐ West Asian and Arab (For example: Afghani, Armenian, Egyptian, Iranian, Iraqi, Jordanian, Lebanese, Palestinian, Syrian, Turk)
- ☐ Southeast Asian (For example: Burmese, Cambodian/ Kampuchean, Laotian, Malaysian, Thai, Vietnamese)
- ☐ Latin American
- ☐ Indonesia or Pacific Islander
- ☐ Person of Mixed Origin (With one parent in one of the visible minority groups listed above)
- ☐ Other Visible Minority Group

D. This portion of the questionnaire will provide the universities with the appropriate data to track the overall economic makeup of new applicants.

D-1 Please list the top five financial sources that will provide you with the necessary funds to attend university. (For example: 1=main source; 2=second most important source; 3=third most important source, etc.)

- ☐ Employment Income
- ☐ Personal Income/Savings
- ☐ Parents
- ☐ Spouse/Partner
- ☐ Employer Financial Assistance
- ☐ Relatives
- ☐ Government Assistance
- ☐ OSAP
- ☐ Awards/Scholarships

Other ☐ Please print _____

D-2 Select the range of GROSS FAMILY income that best reflects your situation.

- ☐ $0-$10,999
- ☐ $11,000-$19,999
- ☐ $20,000-$29,999
- ☐ $30,000-$39,999
- ☐ $40,000-$49,999
- ☐ $50,000-$59,999
- ☐ $60,000-$69,999
- ☐ $70,000-$79,999
- ☐ $80,000-$89,999
- ☐ $90,000-$99,999
- ☐ $100,000-$110,999
- ☐ $111,000-$119,999
- ☐ $120,000-$129,999
- ☐ $130,000-$139,999
- ☐ $140,000 or higher

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1. **What is the purpose of the survey?**

   The purpose of the survey is to better understand the representation of applicants to Ontario universities. The survey is designed to provide data on gender, race, Aboriginal status, disabilities and socio-economic status of applicants. Universities will use this information for research purposes and to possibly plan student programs and services. *Survey results will not be used for admission decisions.*

2. **Are all applicants being asked to answer the questions?**

   Yes. All applicants are being asked to answer the questions in order to obtain a complete and valid picture of applicants to Ontario's universities for the 2000-2001 admission cycle. While participation is voluntary, we encourage you to complete this very important survey.

3. **Will the information I provide affect my chances of being accepted into the program to which I have applied?**

   No. Admission decisions for 2000-2001 have already been made based on the academic requirements set out by the universities.

4. **Is asking for information about gender, race, Aboriginal status and disability legal?**

   Yes. The Ontario Human Rights Commission permits the collection of this type of data when it is used to aid the assessment or creation of programs designed to achieve equity for designated groups.

5. **How are designated groups defined?**

   The definitions used in this survey are those currently used in the *Federal Employment Equity Act* and the Federal Contractors Program. Universities play a central role in supporting employment equity because they are a source of future employees in a wide range of occupations and are providers of services to a diverse community.

6. **I am of mixed racial ancestry. How should I answer the question on race or ethnic group?**

   You may check the group with which you identify most, or you may check as many groups as you feel are applicable. If none of the groups on the list apply to you, please check "other".

7. **I am a member of a minority group, but was born in Canada or hold Canadian citizenship. How should I answer the question on membership in a visible minority?**

   The question is not about citizenship or nationality but rather about race. If you identify yourself as a member of a visible minority because of your race or colour, answer "yes" to this question.

8. **I have a disability controlled by medication, that is not apparent to others (for example: diabetes or epilepsy). How should I answer the question on disability?**

   If you believe that your disability affects your academic performance, even though it's controlled by medication, answer yes to this question, and check the type of disability that best describes your condition from the list provided. If you have a disability that does not appear on the list, please check "other".

9. **I have more than one type of disability. How should I answer the question on the type of disability?**

   You may check as many disabilities as apply to you from the list provided. If you have a disability that does not appear on the list, please check "other".

10. **Who will have access to the information provided on this survey?**

    The Postsecondary Research Unit will collect the information provided on behalf of the Council of Ontario Universities and disclose it only to the applicable universities.

    Only summary reports on the information collected will be published. The information will be presented in such a way that individuals cannot be identified.

11. **Why do you need my reference number?**

    Your reference number links the background information you provide on the survey with information you provided on the application form, such as your gender and address. The link is essential to obtain a complete picture of the mix of students applying to the various institutions. As indicated in question10, individual survey responses will not be made public.

12. **Can I change the information I provide on the survey at a later date?**

    Yes. You can change the information you provide on the survey at a later date. Send a written request for a change of information with your name and reference number to:

    Postsecondary Research Unit
    170 Research Lane
    Guelph ON N1G 5E2

13. **Where can I get more information about the survey?**

    Please contact equityproject@cou.on.ca or 1-888-393-2946.

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COUNCIL OF
ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES

CONSEIL DES
UNIVERSITÉS DE L'ONTARIO

August 2001

Greetings from the Council of Ontario Universities.

In Canada, employment equity policies have designated four groups as needing special attention because of historical disadvantage in the workplace: Aboriginal peoples of Canada, members of visible minority groups, people with disabilities, and women. Universities have a central role in supporting employment equity because they are the source of future employees in a wide range of occupations and because they are providers of services to a diverse community. However, in Canada measuring the degree of under-representation is difficult, as existing national and provincial databases do not include detailed information on the Ontario university student population.

The Council of Ontario Universities' (COU) standing committees on Employment and Educational Equity, and the Status of Women have undertaken this survey project in order to examine the current participation of all groups who apply to Ontario universities and their socio-economic status. **Participation is voluntary and the information provided will not affect admissions decisions. Only summary reports on the information collected will be published. This information will be presented in such a way that individuals cannot be identified.**

You are asked to complete the enclosed survey and return it to the Postsecondary Research Unit in the prepaid envelope by August 31, 2001. The survey can also be completed on-line at <www. usurvey.ca/equity2001a>. The enclosed PIN number is required if you choose the on-line option. This PIN number is unique to you and ensures that others cannot access your information or enter information on your behalf.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission permits the collection of data on designated group status when it is used to assist the assessment or creation of programs designed to achieve equity. At all stages, universities will be carefully adhering to the principles of the Ontario Human Rights Code with respect to voluntary self identification, the purpose of data collection, and the possible development of programs to assist designated groups. The information collected by this survey will be used for research purposes and to possibly plan student programs and services. By completing and returning this survey, or completing the survey on-line, you agree to the use of this information for these purposes.

We would like to thank you for your participation in this project. The value of the universities' equity database will be increased if we have participation by all applicants. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact <equityproject@cou.on.ca> or 1-888-393-2946.

180 Dundas Street West, Suite 1100, Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Z8 416 979-2165 Fax 416 979-8635
E-mail cou@cou.on.ca Web Site www.cou.on.ca

APPENDIX B

Methodology

Survey Design:

- Members of the standing committees based questions A to C of the survey on the Federal Contractor's Program, a program that applies to provincially regulated employers that receive federal government goods or services contracts of $200,000 or more. The members designed question D.
- Accompanying the survey was a letter of explanation and a question and answer (Q&A) sheet. Applicants were also provided with a 1-888 number to call if they had any questions or concerns.
- Both the survey and Q&A stressed that the survey was voluntary and not linked to admission decisions.
- Legal advice was sought to ensure that the survey did not violate the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- All forms and envelopes were printed in both languages.

Survey Administration:

- The Postsecondary Research Unit of the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) administered the survey and compiled the results.
- In mid-August 2001, OUAC sent a personalized, pre-printed survey and return envelope to the home address of all domestic applicants (secondary and non-secondary) to first-year, direct-entry programs.
- Gender information was obtained from the OUAC application form.
- There was no follow-up mailing.
- Applicants were given the choice of responding by mail or by web. To respond on line, each applicant was supplied with an individual PIN by OUAC.
- The deadline to complete the survey was August 31, 2001.

First-Choice Institution:

- To avoid double counting at the system-level, the members chose to organize results according to first-choice institution.
- Additionally, each institution was provided with a breakdown of applicants by accepted choice and designated group.

APPENDIX C

Statistics Canada Report

A senior methodologist from the Statistical Consultations Group, Statistics Canada, conducted a review of the survey design, methodology and overall results. She made the following observations:

Data:

- The survey sample was provided by OUAC. As OUAC is believed to process almost all applications to first-year, direct entry programs, the survey sample was considered very large. This made the data from the survey most useful.
- The actual number of respondents to the survey was also large which may allow for breakdown of the data into smaller groups, for example, by university or by discipline of first-choice. In cases where the numbers are small (such as rehabilitation medicine), no further breakdown would be meaningful. The results have the most statistical validity at the system and aggregated-designated group level. When a group totals fewer than 500 respondents, the results should be approached with caution. This poses a problem for some institutions.

Non-Respondents:

- In any survey, there is **sampling error and non-sampling error**. Sampling error measures the error that occurs when a sample and not the whole population is studied. In this survey, the sample is sufficiently large so that sampling error is minimal.
- The concern of this study is the non-sampling error: the error that creeps into the survey due to reasons other than sampling. While the response rate is low, that in itself is not the problem. The concern is who did not respond to this survey. Are the non-respondents similar or different than the respondents? Or to put it another way, is the sample (the respondents) representative of the population? Follow-up of the non-respondents, may be necessary to gain an accurate picture of the characteristics of the non-respondents.
- Are there other sources of data that could provide a picture of the population? Could information of interest be provided from StatCan surveys on disabilities, census data and education?

Administration of the Survey:

- The survey was carried out at the end of the summer, a time when those attending university are usually moving from one address to another. This fact may partially explain the low response rate. Past studies at Statistics Canada have proven that this is a bad time to be contacting university students.
- A second mailing would have improved the response rate.

Question D:

- Question D1 is somewhat vague and the results should be regarded with caution. Does the question refer to sources for this year or for all years at university? Would "don't know" be a suitable answer? Is government assistance the same as OSAP?
- Question D2 is vague as well. These results should not be regarded as valid. What does gross family income mean? Does it mean mom and dad's income? Does it include students' income and that of other family members as well?

Future Surveys:

- The survey can be useful as a starting point to get a flavour for the current situation and for measuring the situation over time. More work would need to be done on defining the objectives of the survey and question design (especially question D).
- To understand disability and other issues in the university population, we would need to understand disability and other issues in the general population (past, present and future). Surveys such as the Statistics Canada 2001 Census Follow-up on Persons with Disabilities (results available in December 2002) can provide good comparisons.

APPENDIX D

Data Quality

The members of the Standing Committee on Employment and Educational Equity and the Standing Committee on the Status of Women undertook an examination of related studies to compensate for the low response rate. A summary of the few related surveys can be found below.

The comparability of studies is limited by a number of factors:

- definitions;
- period of time being studied;
- survey design;
- collection of data;
- response rate; and
- sample size.

The conclusion of the statistician from Statistics Canada who reviewed the findings was that, while the findings help demonstrate that the Equity Survey results are informative about survey respondents, they provide little information about non-respondents and, consequently, little about the entire applicant pool.

1. The Ontario Universities' Application Centre

Special runs of OUAC data, while not a study per se, were able to provide benchmarks.

In the following tables, the total population is compared to survey respondents. The goal of the comparison is to determine some information about the respondents versus the population; that is, to find out if the respondents are similar to the population.

Pros:

- OUAC data was also used for the Equity Survey.
- Population data was used for the special runs.

Cons:

- The application form collects a limited number of additional variables.

1a. Gender

In Table 1, secondary and non-secondary respondents are compared with the population at the gender level. The comparisons are reasonably close.

Table 1

	SECONDARY		NON-SECONDARY	
	Population	Equity Survey	Population	Equity Survey
Male	44.3%	38.1%	46.4%	39.3%
Female	55.7%	61.9%	53.6%	60.7%
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

1b. Location of Respondent

In Table 2, the secondary and non-secondary respondents are compared by zone to the population. Again, the comparisons are reasonably close. There does not appear to be any cause for concern.

Table 2

	SECONDARY		NON-SECONDARY	
Zone	Population	Equity Survey	Population	Equity Survey
1	3.6%	3.6%	3.8%	3.9%
2	5.5%	6.0%	6.9%	6.0%
3	4.2%	4.7%	3.2%	3.5%
4	8.9%	8.6%	7.3%	7.4%
5	5.4%	6.2%	6.1%	7.0%
6	1.7%	2.3%	1.1%	1.2%
7	47.0%	43.6%	46.3%	46.0%
8	6.9%	7.1%	4.7%	4.4%
9	1.9%	2.0%	1.9%	1.7%
10	9.0%	8.8%	11.7%	11.0%
11	1.7%	2.0%	1.7%	1.9%
12	3.0%	3.6%	3.4%	3.9%
13	1.3%	1.5%	1.9%	2.2%
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%

Zone Legend

1. Essex, Kent
2. Lambton, Middlesex, Elgin, Oxford
3. Haldimand-Norfolk, Niagara
4. Halton, Hamilton-Wentworth, Brant
5. Perth, Waterloo, Wellington
6. Huron, Bruce, Grey, Dufferin
7. Peel, York, Simcoe, Metro Toronto
8. Durham, Northumberland, Prince Edward, Victoria, Peterborough, Hastings, Haliburton
9. Lennox & Addington, Frontenac, Leeds & Grenville
10. Lanark, Ottawa-Carleton, Dundas/Stormont/Glengarry, Prescott & Russell
11. Muskoka, Parry Sound, Nipissing, Renfrew
12. Manitoulin, Sudbury District, Algoma, Cochrane, Timiskaming, Sudbury Region
13. Thunder Bay, Kenora, Rainy River, Thunder Bay Region

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1c. Program Choice

In Table 3, comparisons are made by selected programs. Again, the comparisons are reassuring.

Table 3

Program	1st Choice*	Percent of Applicants	Equity Survey
Arts	27,160	31.9%	31.0%
Science	15,270	17.9%	18.5%
Commerce	12,620	14.8%	13.9%
Engineering	8,662	10.2%	10.7%
Diploma Program	1,763	2.1%	1.8%
Mathematics	2,348	2.8%	2.5%

* As of September 20, 2001

1d. Institutional Accepted Choice*

Table 4 compares the percentage of total applicants who accepted their first-, second-, third- or fourth- or greater-choice institution to survey respondents who accepted first-, second-, third- or fourth- or greater-choice institution.

Again, the results of the Equity Survey compare favourably to the population.

Table 4

	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice	4th or greater choice
Total Applicants	54.1%	21.4%	13.8%	10.8%
Equity Survey	55.9%	20.8%	13.3%	10.1%

*As of September 20,2001

2. ACUMEN University Applicant Survey 2001

In winter 2001, ACUMEN's University Applicant Survey (UAS) was administered to 10,000 randomly selected applicants to Ontario universities. All questions were self-reported. The response rate was 18.5%.

Pros:

- The sample consisted of 2001 applicants to Ontario universities.
- The survey was administered through OUAC.

Cons:

- The survey was administered to a smaller sample size than the Equity Survey.
- The UAS was administered in the spring, whereas the Equity Survey was administered in late summer.
- Each survey used different definitions of visible minority.

In the following table, UAS results are compared with Equity Survey results for the Ethno-culture groups. While there is comparable data available for only limited groups (White, southeast Asian and Black), the comparison is good and there is no cause for alarm.

Ethno-Cultural Group	Acumen Survey	Equity Survey
White	69.8%	66.0%
Southeast Asian	1.5%	1.1%
Black	2.8%	2.8%

However, this survey had a response rate of 18.5%. The concern with this survey is similar to the concern of the Equity Survey: are non-respondents similar to respondents? Is the sample representative of the population? Can the survey results be used to make imputations about the entire population (that is, applicants)?

The opinion of the statistician from Statistics Canada was that these findings cannot be used to learn more about the Equity Survey non-respondents.

3. Summary of Number of Students with Disabilities at Ontario Universities
SOURCE: Annual reports provided by university offices for students with disabilities; Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU).

The following table shows the number of students with disabilities in Ontario universities over the past six years as classified by MTCU. Four of the seven categories are directly comparable to the Equity Survey.

Pros:

- As with the Equity Survey, the data concerns Ontario university students.
- Percentages are fairly consistent across years suggesting that year-to-year changes in the disabilities of applicants are not dramatic.

Cons:

- Total enrolment, not applicant data, is collected.
- 2001-2002 data is not yet available and 2000-2001 is incomplete.
- Classifications are not fully comparable.

The classification differences between the MTCU/institutional data and the Equity Survey data make comparisons problematic. However, it is noteworthy that in both data sets learning disability was the number one disability.

Using the total number of respondents, one can see that 840, or approximately 4.9%, of the 17,155 respondents to Question A indicated that they were disabled. In 2000, approximately 8,000 students out of a student population of approximately 264,000 identified themselves as being disabled. This is 3% of the total university population. According to the Statistics Canada statistician, the 3% versus 4.9% is not a significant variance, but the breakdown of the disabilities is of concern.

MTCU: Students with Disabilities (1)

Classification	1995-96 (2)		1996-97 (2)		1997-98 (2)		1998-99 (2)		1999-2000 (2)		2000-2001* (2)		Equity Survey
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Learning Disability	3,555	44.4%	3,297	43.5%	3,346	42.9%	3,244	41.2%	3,547	44.5%	2959	43%	34%
Chronic Medical/Systemic Disability	1,657	20.7%	1,595	21.1%	1,876	24.1%	2,133	27.1%	2,129	26.7%	2043	30%	
Mobility Disability	1,255	15.7%	1,310	17.3%	1,225	15.7%	1,177	14.9%	1,169	14.7%	881	12.8%	3.9%
Blind/Low Vision	363	4.5%	331	4.4%	333	4.3%	334	4.2%	346	4.3%	243	3.5%	8.9%
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	307	3.8%	255	3.4%	297	3.8%	322	4.1%	307	3.9%	232	3.4%	10.4%
Multiple	293	3.7%	262	3.5%	390	5.0%	304	3.9%	325	4.1%	402	5.8%	
Other (3)	573	7.2%	524	6.9%	331	4.2%	365	4.6%	144	1.8%	123	1.8%	
Total	8,003	100%	7,574	100%	7,798	100%	7,879	100%	7967	100%	***6883***	100%	

*2000-2001 is incomplete.

NOTES: (1) Students who have self-identified through the offices for students with disabilities at 22 universities.
(2) Total represents clients who have been reported more than once because of having multiple disabilities.
(3) Data includes students with temporary disabilities, head injuries and assessment/documentation pending.

SOURCE: Annual Reports provided by university offices for students with disabilities; MTCU.

30

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4. Statistics Canada 1996 Census

Pros:

- Census data is considered to be very accurate data.

Cons:

- The census does not collect applicant data.
- The most recent census data available was 1996.

The overall comparability with Census data was very limited.

4a. Aboriginal Persons

In 1996, there were 25,065 Aboriginal persons (registered and non-registered) aged 15 to 24 years in Ontario. This accounted for 1.8% of the 15- to 24-year old population. In the Equity Survey, 1.8% of the respondents reported being an Aboriginal person.

According to census data, Aboriginal persons aged 15 to 24 had a much lower incidence of university attendance with 0.03% holding a bachelor's degree or higher (0.02% for males and 0.04% for females), compared to the non-Aboriginal population with 6% holding a bachelor's degree or higher (4.9% of for males and 7.5% for females).

Regarding program choice, census data indicates that both male and female Aboriginals over the age of 15 chose: education, recreation and counselling; social sciences and related fields; and commerce, management and administration as their first-, second- and third-choice.

Comparison of program choice results is limited by the different definitions used by the Equity Survey and census questionnaire. Equity Survey respondents who reported being an Aboriginal person listed arts, science, commerce and engineering as their first-choice program (36.2%, 14.6%, 8.6% and 8.3%, respectively).

4b. Visible Minorities

According to 1996 census data, visible minorities accounted for 18.9% of the population aged 15 to 24 years (18.6% males and 19.2% females). Non-visible minorities accounted for the remaining 81.1%.

Of individuals with some university education, 23.3% were visible minorities (24.5% males and 22.4% females). Of the total Ontarians who are 15- to 24-years old with university education, the largest ethnic group was Chinese (7.5%). Non-visible minorities accounted for 76.7% of the population (75.5% males and 77.7% females). In the Equity Survey, 34% of the respondents reported being a visible minority. The largest group was Chinese (37.5%).

APPENDIX E

Glossary of Terms

Response Rate: The number of respondents divided by the sample size. The response rate depends on many things including the subject of the survey, method of contact, number of contacts and time of contact. The Equity Survey's response rate is low, which raises concern about the non-respondents and representativeness of the resultant sample.

Sampling Size: The appropriate sample size depends on many things including the variability of the population concerning the area of study and the degree of reliability required in the data. The Equity Survey attempted to contact the population, while only some actually responded. These respondents are now considered to be a random sample of the population. The question to be considered: Is this a random sample?

Non-Sampling Error: Non-sampling error includes:

- interviewer error;
- measurement instrument bias;
- processing error;
- non-response bias; and
- response bias (which occurs when survey participants deliberately falsify information or misrepresent information).

For the purposes of the Equity Survey, non-sampling error due to non-response is the greatest concern. Non-sampling error refers to the individuals who are selected to participate in a research study, but who fail to respond to that survey. If there is a systematic difference between those who responded and those who did not, then the survey results are subject to non-response bias.

Sampling Error: Sampling errors are due to the fact that the results from the sample may differ from those that might have been obtained if the entire population had been surveyed. Sampling error decreases as the sample size increases. It is not a concern of the Equity Survey given the large sample size.

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